

Health Advisory: Ebola Infection Prevention Guidance for Dental Offices, 21 OCT 2014

Action requested:

- **Be familiar with criteria for determining who is at risk of Ebola virus disease (EVD):**
 1. **Persons who have traveled to an Ebola-affected country* in the past 21 days or,**
 2. **Persons who have had contact with an EVD patient in the past 21 days**
- **Dental professionals are advised to take a medical history, including a travel history, and assess the risk for potential EVD exposures in all patients, before performing dental procedures.**
 - **As early as possible in the clinical encounter, ask patients whether they have one of the above risk factors for EVD exposure in the last 21 days.**
 - **Notify Public Health at 206-296-4774 of all persons with one OR both risk factors while the patient is in the office so we can assist with assessment and follow-up monitoring if necessary.**
- **Patients who report either of the above risk factors should be assessed for symptoms of Ebola including: Fever (100.4°F/38.0°C or higher), headache, weakness, muscle pain, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, bruising, or abnormal bleeding.**
 - **Notify Public Health immediately for patients who report fever or compatible symptoms AND travel to an Ebola-affected country or contact with an Ebola patient in the past 21 days**
- **Ebola infection is not transmitted by asymptomatic persons (before the onset of symptoms); infectivity increases as disease severity increases.**
- **Dental health professionals should postpone elective dental care on all patients who have been to an Ebola-affected country in the last 21 days or who have had contact with an Ebola patient until 21 days have passed.**
- **If dental care cannot be postponed, take appropriate precautions (including, but not limited to, the following steps) to protect dental health workers and others from potential EVD exposures (See link below for complete and current infection control guidance):**
 - **Conduct the procedure in a negative pressure room with the doors kept closed throughout the procedure.**
 - **All staff present in the room should wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE): see link, below.**
 - **Maintain a list of all persons entering the room during the procedure and minimize the number of staff in the room.**
 - **Use dedicated disposable medical equipment (if possible).**
 - **Thoroughly clean the procedure room according to the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for Ebola disinfection (www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/environmental-infection-control-in-hospitals.html).**

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Background

The 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa is the largest in history and continues to grow. The ongoing, although relatively low potential for imported cases in the United States underscores the need for all healthcare providers to be prepared to promptly identify and report potential EVD-exposed persons and EVD cases to public health authorities for months and possibly longer.

Ebola is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, **saliva**, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola or objects (needles, syringes, etc.) that have been contaminated with the virus. Dental procedures on ill Ebola patients might create aerosols of blood or saliva that could pose a risk to dental staff.

A person infected with EVD is not considered contagious until symptoms appear. Due to the virulent nature of the disease, it is highly unlikely that someone with Ebola symptoms will seek dental care when they are severely ill. None the less, **the above recommendations are made as a precaution and to minimize concern among staff that may be involved in the care of persons who are later identified to have EVD risk factors.**

Palliative care for serious oral health conditions, dental infections and pain can be provided if necessary after consulting with the patient's physician and conforming to EVD infection control guidance and with the use of recommended personal protective equipment (see resources, below).

Public Health – Seattle & King County is available 24/7 for consultation when a case of Ebola is suspected. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 206-296-4774.

***As of 10/21/2014, the only Ebola-affected countries are : Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone.**

See <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/case-counts.html> for the most current information.

RESOURCES

- American Dental Association Ebola resources: <http://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/ebola-resources>
- CDC - Review of human to human transmission of Ebola virus: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/human-transmission.html>
- CDC - Transmission of Ebola virus: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/index.html>
- CDC - Infection control precautions and other clinical guidance: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/index.html>